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ARTISTIC ANDIRONS.

IN these days of stoves and furnaces, the andirons that stood in the old-fashioned fire-places have generally retreated to the garret or else disappeared altogether from the household scene. The commendable disposition to revive the open fire, as an æsthetic luxury, tends, however, to bring them once more into vogue, and gives interest to the fact that in the past much artistic skill has been lavished upon these humble articles. Up to the sixteenth century they were almost always of iron, of large size and finely decorated; afterward copper and bronze were more generally employed, and some remarkable works of art were produced. Of the two andirons represented in the illustration, the one surmounted by a figure belongs to a pair that may be ranked among the most beautiful specimens of the Florentine industry of the sixteenth century. They were transferred to the Château of Fontainebleau and placed with other bronzes of like origin in the fine gallery of Francis I. The other andiron is of copper and of French manufacture, and dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is now in the same gallery.

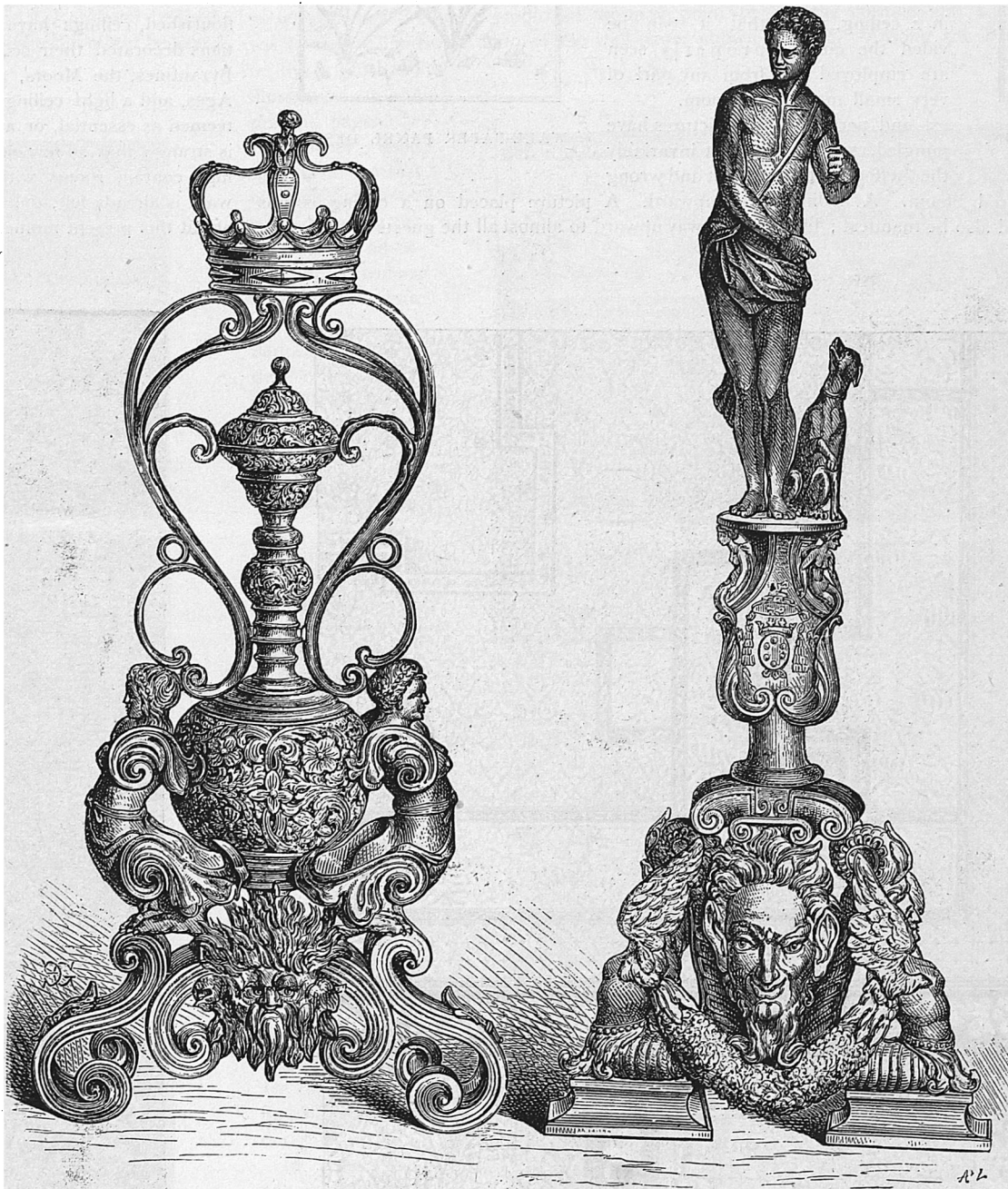
DEBASED INDIAN CARPETS.

A LARGE proportion of the Indian carpets in the market come from the Government jails of Hindustan. Mrs. Eliot James, in her recent work on "Indian Industries," protests against the degradation of the native art through such competition with the caste weavers. She gives the following quotation from *The Pioneer*: A regiment ordering some carpets at a well-known jail to take to England for its mess, sent some officers to see what patterns could be procured; and the superintendent of the manufacturing department is said to have exhibited in great triumph a carpet which had been made for an English nobleman, who had ordered it through some friends. The carpet was a groundwork of most lovely ruby red, with some creamy and ivory-white flowers (some kind of lily) running through it, but was entirely spoiled by being bespattered with some filthy-looking yellow daubs at regular intervals, as if a bottle of West India pickles had been turned out, every three feet or so, over it. On inquiry it was found out, that this was a local improvement on the old pattern, it being considered that the English peer would expect more splendid coloring from India. These officers examined a variety of patterns without finding what they wanted, until, when leaving, some old Persian and Indian patterns were handed down, covered with dust, the superintendent saying he thought nothing of them. Correspondence went on with several jails, and they all offered to make up the patterns in any colors that might be selected.

The *Pioneer* adds: Anything more grossly wrong cannot be conceived, and it would be no more than right if every jail were at once inspected and every vitiated pattern committed to the flames. It would indeed be deplorable if, for want of care, carpets made in India should be so corrupted as to damage the trade.

The London Athenæum says: It is well known that

the Agra jail is singular among Indian jails for scrupulously following Persian patterns in the designs of the carpets manufactured by it. An Agra jail carpet exhibited at Paris in 1878 was, as pointed out at the time, remarkable for the fine proportion of its border to the centre. The borders of modern Oriental carpets are generally made too narrow. In the mosaic floors of the Greeks and Romans, which were evidently suggested by Oriental tapestry, the border was always remarkably broad, and in the older Persian carpets it is often a yard deep and more. The singular excellence in design of the Agra jail carpets is due to Sir John Strachey's influence. When visiting the jail, many years ago, the zealous superintendent triumphantly showed him some carpets he had been manufacturing from the vilest European designs. Sir John asked him if they were all the patterns of the kind he possessed. "No; not by any means," replied the superintendent. "I have ransacked all the factories in England for their latest pat-



ANDIRONS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES.

terns." Sir John begged that he might see them all; and when he was at last satisfied that all had been brought out, he ordered them to be all burned in the heap as they lay before him, and that for the future only native patterns should be followed without deviation. The Agra jail carpets are, however, still defective in harmony of coloring.

THE first condition of furniture is that it shall be useful; the second, that it shall be beautiful.

PROFESSOR DONDERS, the most distinguished oculist in Holland, in a lecture on color at Amsterdam recently, laid it down that green must be ranked with the primitive colors, like red, blue, and yellow. Green, he argued, could not be produced by mixing pure yellow and blue: such a composition would be white. The green color apparently derived from the mixture of two paints was, in reality, the result of "subtraction."

Decorative Art Notes.

SOME painted d'oyleys at a recent dinner party were alternately of white and blue satin, circular, edged with narrow gold fringe, and from eighteen to twenty inches in circumference. About three-fourths of an inch from the edge was a circle marked out, and on this was painted a wreath of small green ivy leaves. Inside this, and in the centre of the d'oyley, was an animal's head, or a bird sketched in Indian ink, each one being different. Some dogs' heads were particularly lifelike and effective.

AN ingenious fire-place decoration is thus described: A mantel-board topped by a slight ebonized frame shelf of three tiers, the whole draped with black satin and gilt lace, the grate replaced by an ebonized cabinet, the doors of which were panelled with gold leather cloth on the outside, and black satin worked with gold butterflies, and studded between with Indian beetles. The alternate shelves and tiny drawers of this cabinet were filled with curios, and large Japanese black and gold fans, mounted on hand screens, flanked it on each side. In the same room, an ebonized banner-screen was ingeniously utilized as a flower-stand, by the screen being removed, two half-moon shaped black and gold wicker baskets put round the base for pots, a flat top serving as a support for a drooping pot plant, and furnished underneath with chains of various lengths with hooks, to which ornamental baskets of various sizes, filled with flowers and moss, were suspended.

IN England the embroidery trade fell so low in the reign of George II. that it was judged necessary to protect it by somewhat severe enactments. "No foreign embroidery," so runs the statute, "shall be imported, upon pain of being forfeited and burnt, and penalty of a hundred pounds for each piece. No person shall sell, or expose for sale, any foreign embroidery, on pain of having it forfeited and burnt, and penalty of a hundred pounds. All such embroidery may be seized and burnt, and the mercer in whose custody it was found shall forfeit a hundred pounds."

PAINTED tea-cloths and cosies seem particularly popular just now. Silk of all colors is used, and not only are flowers and birds illustrated, but even landscapes and water scenes are depicted in colors on the surface. The cosy is, of course, of one material; but the cloth is sometimes of muslin, or else of soft crash, with the painted silk border stitched on.

WE hear of an ingenious person who has converted an old thick shawl into a drugget by cutting out the leaves and flowers from a worn-out piece of printed druggetting, and grouping them on the shawl. When a satisfactory pattern had been thus arranged, these flowers were pasted on and pressed with an iron, and the edges worked over with the commonest coarse gray yarn, the edge of the shawl being bound with red carpet binding. It was put down in a furnished house over a shabby carpet, and was a complete success.

A DECORATIVE Art Society has been organized in Evansville, Ind., with the following officers: Mrs. A. B. Miller, president; Mrs. W. T. Igleheart and Mrs. Bixby, vice-presidents; Mrs. Wilkinson, secretary; Mrs. H. W. Keller, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Dan. Ragon, treasurer. Mrs. Theo. I. Holcomb is to teach china painting and art embroidery, Miss Rosa O'Burn drawing and oil painting, and the president will give instruction in water-color drawing, lace making, etc.

ALABASTER plaques for oil painting are a novelty in decorative art. They are translucent, and when set on stands against the light are very attractive. Some effective specimens of what can be done with them are to be seen at the artists' material rooms of Miss M. T. Wynne, 75 East Thirteenth Street.